

September 2003

Educational Opportunity Grant Program Adoption of Updated Rules

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Washington State Educational Opportunity Grant program provides \$2,500 grants to eligible placebound financially needy Washington residents who have completed an associate of arts or associate of science degree, which enables them to complete upper-division study at eligible institutions. At the Higher Education Coordinating Board's July meeting, staff briefed the Board on proposed changes to program rules. The rules reflect changes in statutory language that expands student eligibility to residents of all counties and includes state-supported branch campuses as eligible institutions. The rules also contain other administrative updates.

A public hearing was held on September 9, 2003, and no comments were received. Therefore, no changes have been made to the rules that were discussed in July. The Board is asked to adopt the updated rules on a permanent basis at this meeting.

Program Background

The Educational Opportunity Grant was created in 1990 as one of several strategies aimed at increasing college and university enrollments at the upper-division level. Another strategy was to build branch campuses for the University of Washington and Washington State University in Bothell, Tacoma, Spokane, Vancouver, and the Tri-Cities. At that time, it was decided that EOG funds would not be allocated to students attending the new branch campuses, and that students in only 13 counties in the highly populated corridors of the state would be eligible to receive EOG funds so they could attend existing institutions that had unused capacity. In 2000, Board staff conducted the second review of the EOG program to evaluate its ongoing effectiveness. During its December 2000 meeting, the Board adopted the recommendations of the evaluation to make the changes noted below, which eventually passed the Legislature as SSB5676, and became law on July 27, 2003.

This program, currently funded at \$2,867,000 per year, annually benefits about 1,130 students.

Summary of Proposed Adoption

The rules as outlined in more detail in the July Board packet basically follow the revised statute and contain these changes:

- Student eligibility is expanded to include Washington residents of all counties;
- Eligible institutions now include state-supported branch campuses;
- Eligible institutions now include an institution, branch, extension or facility affiliated with a regionally accredited nonprofit institution in another state, provided State Need Grant eligibility rules are met; and
- Procedures are updated to allow grant periods to begin during any academic term, with a maximum award period of no more than the equivalent of eight quarters.

Other proposed revisions are largely administrative, such as dropping reference to the program being a demonstration project and references to the notion of “existing unused capacity”.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends Board adoption of Resolution 03-25.

RESOLUTION NO. 03-25

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Coordinating Board is directed by RCW 28B.101 to administer the Educational Opportunity Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Coordinating Board is authorized by RCW 28B.80 to adopt rules as necessary to implement the program; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature passed EESB5676 revising RCW 28B.101 which became law on July 27, 2003; and

WHEREAS, The program rules, known as WAC 250-70, must reflect these changes and have gone through the revision process as required by the Code Reviser's Office,

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Coordinating Board held a public hearing on September 9, 2003, and received no comments;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board adopts permanent rules amending WAC 250-70 to reflect the current statutory and administrative provisions of the Educational Opportunity Grant Program.

Adopted:

September 24, 2003

Attest:

Bob Craves, Chair

Ann Ramsay-Jenkins, Secretary